

WOMEN ARE POWER in NEW RUSSIA



RUSSIAN WOMEN RAILWAY WORKERS

By LIEUTENANT NORTON C. TRAVIS
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RUSSIA'S women, alone, stand today shoulder to shoulder with men. They occupy, indeed, a place higher than that of men of their own nation, for the spotlight of the world is turned upon them. In the scales of blind Justice, where are balanced autocracy or democracy for Russia, it is the Russian woman who turns the balance for freedom.

Russian women soldiers, virtually untrained and unofficer, drove back the Germans in their first trial of fire. For eighteen days I was quartered in the first line of trenches with 2,500 of these Russian women warriors. I studied them at close quarters—there are no more intrepid soldiers in all this world than were these women of a divided and bewildered nation.

The Battalion of Death is no more. They were wiped out by German shells and German bayonets, and only four wounded survivors remain of 200 who fought through hell fire to shame the men of Russia into a sense of patriotic duty. To lack of training and of officers is ascribed the annihilation of this first battalion of women warriors in the modern world. They failed in their object—the stimulating of compatriots to defense of their country.

That free Russia is the power of women is indicated by the fact that those who were connected with the imperial circle of the former court are confined in the prison of Peter and Paul, guarded by barriers of water as well as by walls of stone, while minor offenders have been banished from Petrograd.

The Russian woman warrior is the product of outdoor life and simple, wholesome food. In the ranks one finds the majority of soldiers from the upper class of Russian society, and by their sides are serfs and peasants accustomed to working in the fields of Siberia and Russia with the men of their households.

Ladies of Russia are noted for their proficiency in outdoor games and sports; they are great walkers, skaters, horseback riders and devotees to sledding, games that require vigor and furnish excitement, and to their summer and winter carnivals and pageants, which occur several times a year. At these times it is their pleasure to indulge in native folk dances, and dancing on the ice is a pastime to which they are devoted, and to which, I believe, they owe much of their muscular development and rapidity and ease of action. The life of the Russian woman has bred her to war's service; she does not care for afternoon teas or any form of indoor amusement during the daytime. Instead you will find her engaged in active sports on the frozen Neva, beside the trolley tracks that link icebound towns in a chain of gay activity, even more bustling than when boats ply the river in summer and fetch and carry between Russia's capital and the Neva's outlying villages.

And now you will find women at the switches along the shining miles of ice-floored single track of the Neva's winter trolley lines.

In singular contrast to the sturdy, muscular build of Russian women, stocky of form and short of stature, are Russian men of the upper class, who, when they acquire refinement and high-breeding, seem, also, to become weak and effeminate.

Not only in trench work, but in the ordinary avocations of men one now finds Russian women. Street-car conductors and motorwomen handle the traffic with efficiency. Conductors call out the streets, and from the second belt on the man's coat that tops their blue skirts, they draw checks of varying colors and hand them out in receipt of fares. These colors represent from one to five fares, and also indicate the distance a passenger expects to travel. One fare now costs fifteen kopecks, or two and a half cents. Under ordinary conditions fifteen kopecks were worth five cents, but two and a half cents is a lot of money in Russia today. On the other hand, while women fill places on railroads and street cars, there are still to be found many men driving motorcars.

Another avocation of women is the driving of drays—Russian dumpcarts—a flat, two-wheeled wagon drawn by one or two horses. In the latter case one horse is always harnessed outside the shafts, leaving the burden to be borne by the animal inside of them.

This peculiar method of harnessing is even carried out in ambulances at the front, and a wounded man transported in this fashion usually has the life bounced out of him on his way to the hospital. Sometimes, indeed, such makeshift ambulances are drawn by men, for life is accounted so cheap in Russia that the Russian will not use horses when men can serve the purpose of draft animals.

Not only men, but women, take the place of horses. They often draw their field kitchens about, and brounce to cook their good bread, made of wheat and rye flour; their soup, horse meat and vegetables. Russian horse meat is not half bad, and that is their principal army meat. Horses are plentiful, but very small, and they do not furnish much beef, so that numbers are slaughtered to



MEMBERS OF THE BATTALION OF DEATH

obtain a sufficient supply. I should judge that Russian ponyskin coats, which have often been so popular in America, ought to be cheaper than ever this season if there has been any way of curing and transporting the skins of these glossy-coated animals of the steppes.

Women's army kitchens are adequately supplied with horse meat, and from ladies of rank to serfs the women soldiers have learned how to prepare palatable food. They have also learned not only to draw their field pieces, but actually carry them.

All women are enrolled in the infantry division of the army, so that theirs are machine guns, which three or four women can carry together. Some of these guns are light enough to be borne on the shoulders of one woman.

While Russians are not good marksmen they are expert at bayonet work, and there is nothing the Germans fear more than a Russian bayonet encounter, when the sturdy dwarf of the North not only sticks his enemy through, but has an appalling habit of lifting him up on the bayonet. I saw one victim of this shocking act slide off the keen blade, dead.

And if the Germans fear such attacks of uninspired Russian men, they dread the savage charge of fiery Russian women, and when they succeeded in capturing three in battle they tortured them to death by way of satisfying spite against those hundreds of young women who lay slain—martyrs to patriotism.

I watched women soldiers dig out their own trenches, where rain or bombardment had caused them to fall in; pull around their heavy ammunition wagons and guns, as well as their field kitchens, and set up their barbed-wire entanglements. Many of them were noblewomen and wealthy members of the "upper froth" of Russia; quite a number were wives and mothers whose husbands were fighting in another sector on the line; and every one was a volunteer.

With courage went cheerfulness. In the midst of the hardships of trench life—and they can scarcely be overestimated—these women sang ballads and catchy songs as they worked at the business of death. Some played on musical instruments that they had brought into the trenches, while most of them found time to attend to the comfort of their pets, especially the battalion mascots—a parrot and a cat.

All were short of clothing—simple as was their uniform. It consisted of a grayish khaki colored material, like washed-out khaki, made in overalls and jumper, with a tight-fitting high collar and belt. They wore the same boots as were used by men, and some had their feet encased in shoes and puttees. One of the chief difficulties in equipping women has been to fit the "upper froth" with boots, and to the rigors of trench life has been added the discomfort and, I fancy, pain of dainty feet in coarse, heavy unaccustomed boots, standing often in a mire of mud and water.

Women soldiers had shifts of ten days in first-line trenches of the enemy, with four hours on and four hours off duty. At the least unusual noise or sudden skirmish the whole 2,500 women were out and in readiness for battle.

Every thirty feet in the women's sector stood a "post," or sentry, who fired without ceasing. It was her duty to call out, on occasion, the soldiers who rested in their malodorous dugouts on shelves that protruded from the walls along each side.

Mere children were many of these modern Amazons, for their ages vary from fifteen to thirty-five years, and for ten days on a stretch they had no

opportunity to change or remove their clothing. When not fighting or on sentry duty the women rest as best they may in their dugouts, where roar of guns does not penetrate very loudly. No ventilation reaches these deep burrows under the hills except that at the entrance to the trench, and conditions are offensive to every sense of comfort and sanitation. Our Red Cross commission sought to remedy some of the worst features of Russian trench life, but modern war is one of unbelievable horrors, not the least of which is the insect pestilence of the trenches.

Every ten days a section of trench is cleaned up and its occupants are stripped, sprayed with an insect destroyer, brushed down with brooms, given a bath and clean clothes. In singular contrast to the many antiquated methods of battlefield existence common in the Russian army are comfortable bath trains provided for the soldiers' fortnightly bath.

As the world knows, the Battalion of Death was organized by Madame Vera Butchikoff, who lived in a small Cossack settlement in Siberia at the outbreak of the war. When Madame Butchikoff's husband was killed in battle she formed the Legion of Death, mainly to shame Russian men into action, and partly to relieve the awful suspense and monotony of village life far from the scene of strife. Therefore, in the original ranks of women warriors were to be found hardy peasants from the vast agricultural region of Siberia, and many such women belong to the present regiments of feminine soldiers.

Far different from their once peaceful, remote lives is the terrific action of the battlefield, where instead of distant sparks of stars in quiet skies, they witness clusters of shells shrieking upward, five a minute, and bursting around a moving speck in the heavens—some airplane target for great guns. Timed to explode at 5,000 or 6,000 feet, as well as the distance of the plane can be gauged, the shell turns to fall at the designated height and shrapnel sprays the night skies with vivid fountains of flame.

In the great Russian upheaval Siberia has determined to achieve an independence of its own. I found the people in this vast storehouse of nature's wealth distinct in type from those in any other part of Russia. They are a mixture of Mongol and Russ; a peculiar young-old folk. Nowhere else in the world have I found as strange looking people. The men have a drawn expression and fixed, staring eyes. Women, too, exhibit this characteristic to a marked degree, and everywhere one finds the form of youth surmounted by the facial appearance of age. I wondered whether this expression proceeded from the squalor of their meager lives. They are an exceedingly dirty, filthy people; ragged for the most part, and with feet shod in a sort of straw sandal. With a land of rare agricultural, timber and mineral wealth surrounding them, they yet wear an appearance of stolid dejection.

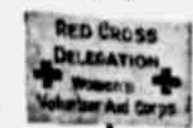
HAD A GOOD FATHER.

The store was crowded with customers when a child walked in and with an important air approached the owner of the store, held up a quarter, and remarked in a high treble: "My father said I could buy anything I wanted for my supper."

"Well, you have a good father," said the storekeeper.

"Yes," replied the child, "and it's me that knows it."

What Can We Do?



Knitted articles in either gray or khaki colored yarn are acceptable to the Red Cross for use in the army. Yarn and knitting needles may be procured either from Red Cross chapters or from stores, provided the yarn is of the same grade and needles of the same size as those described in this circular.

The needles referred to in these directions are standardized Red Cross needles. Their diameter is given opposite their respective number.

Knitting Needles No. 1—135-1,000

Inches.

Knitting Needles No. 2—175-1,000

Inches.

Knitting Needles No. 3—200-1,000

Inches.

General Directions.

Stitches should not be cast on too tightly.

Knitting should be done evenly and firmly and all holes should be avoided.

Joining should be done by splicing or by leaving two or three inches at each end of the yarn to be darned in carefully.

All knots, ridges or lumps should be most carefully avoided, especially in socks, as they are apt to blister the feet.

Sleeveless Sweater.

Two and one-half hanks of yarn

(¾ pounds); one pair Red Cross needles No. 3.

Cast on 80 stitches. Knit 2, part 2 stitches for 4 inches. Knit plain until the sweater measures 25 inches. Knit 28 stitches, bind off 24 stitches for neck, loose. Knit 28 stitches. Knit 7 ridges on each shoulder, cast on 24 stitches. Knit plain for 21 inches. Part 2, knit 2 stitches for 4 inches. Sew up sides, leaving 9 inches for armholes. Two rows single crochet around neck and 1 row single crochet around the armholes.

Wristlets No. 1.

One-half hank of yarn (¾ pound); 1 pair Red Cross needles No. 2.

Cast on 48 stitches, knit 2 and part 2 for 12 inches, and sew up leaving 2 inches open space for thumb 2 inches from the side.

Wristlets No. 2.

One-half hank of yarn (¾ pound); 4 Red Cross needles No. 1.

Cast on 32 stitches on 3 needles; 16-16-20. Knit 2, part 2 for 8 inches. To make opening for thumb, knit 2, part 2 to end of third needle, turn; knit and part back to end of first needle, always slipping first stitch; turn. Continue knitting back and forth for 2 inches. From this point continue as at first for 4 inches for the hand. Bind off loosely and buttonhole thumb opening.

Pre-Easter Parade of New Blouses.



White, blue, flesh, maize, bisque, tau and rose—these are some of the colors in new georgette crepe blouses that appear in the gay troop of spring styles, passing in review before Easter. Along with them are dainty organdie blouses in white or light colors or combinations of white and a color, and dark colored blouses of crepe or silk that lend dignity to the company. There are few innovations in style. Sleeves continue to be long and necks open in a "V" at the front with much graceful management of collars.

But the high-necked blouse is to be reported as represented in all the showings of new models, along with many that are not high. It is to have a place of honor even if it cannot hope for as great popularity as blouses with open throats or round necks. These are cooler and more comfortable, also more practical, but the high-necked blouse has much distinction and is suited to certain styles and types that do not wear the open throat with equal success.

A slip-over blouse of georgette crepe is shown in the picture with Chinese collar and a smart sleeve. The collar at the back is widened into a narrow sailor effect. Sleeves are cut in kimono style and the blouse fastens at each side with small buttons and button holes. What looks like hand embroidery in colored silk floss, appears

as an embellishment of the front, but it is really done on a machine built for this kind of work.

The sleeves are widened by a puff set in at the elbow and this is gathered into a deep plain cuff that fastens with small buttons like those on the front of the blouse. The buttons are extended along the back of the puff.

Blouses cut in one with their sleeves, kimono fashion, are becoming only to slender figures. A popular set-in sleeve for this season is full from arm's eye to cuff and is gathered into a deep close-fitting cuff that buttons in the same manner as shown in the picture. Blouses of white georgette, with collars and cuffs of colored, printed foulard are among the novelties for spring and blouses of fine, white voile with convertible collars of colored gingham and cuffs to match, suggest something new and attractive for the thrifty woman who makes many of her own waists at home.

Julia S. Bortoloz

Embroidery Trimmings.

Chinese embroideries constitute an unusual bit of interesting trimming.

Spring Styles.

The silhouette for spring? It is straight with the fullness in front.